DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 261 315 CG 018 513

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TITLE The Dual-Earner Family's Impact on the Child and the Family System: Review and Implications for Counseling Practice.
PUB DATE 85
NOTE 36p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; *Child Caregivers; *Children; *Child Welfare; *Coping; Day Care; *Employed Parents; *Family Life; Stress Variables

ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of American families in which both spouses work. The literature regarding preschoolers suggests that one cannot say that being from a dual-earner family will necessarily harm a child. Key issues center not on whether both parents work, but on the quality of substitute care and how well the family copes with the stresses of a dual-earner lifestyle. The research on school-age children has examined the issues of time spent with the children, sex-role modeling, academic achievement, intelligence quotients, career aspirations, adequacy of substitute care, psychosocial adjustment and perceived rejection. Generally, the literature shows that the mother's working does not have to adversely affect the child. There are many mediating factors that are crucial in determining whether the dual-earner lifestyle results in harm or benefits, i.e., the child's age, sex, and relationship to parents; family socioeconomic status; nature of mother's work; family's coping resources; and the role of the father. Counselors can help dual-earner families in their adjustment through diagnostic, guidance and counseling, consultation and program development, and referral interventions. In addition, counselors must continue to study the dual-earner family phenomenon in order to help families cope with the stresses and take advantage of the opportunities for growth and change. A nine-page reference list is appended. (NRB)

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# The Dual-Earner Family's Impact on the Child and the Family System: Review and Implications for Counseling Practice

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# THE DUAL-EARNER FAMILY'S IMPACT ON THE CHILD AND THE FAMILY SYSTEM: REVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE

One of the major changes in the American family system over the past few decades has been the rapid increase in both partners working. Shaevitz and Shaevitz (1979) have described the dual-career couple phenomenon as the most important social change in the twentieth century. There has been debate over what these families should be named. At first the term dual-career was used, but this received criticism because it made the inaccurate assumption that, when both partners worked, it was in a professional career (Gappa, O'Barr, & St. John-Parsons, 1980). The term dual-worker has been used, but it was challenged by Aldous (1982). She noted that the term dual-worker was used only when both partners worked outside of the home, thus discounting the non-paid work of homemaking. The term dual-worker also tended to refer to couples where both partners worked at a non-professional job and the woman was working more out of economic necessity than out of desire for self-fulfillment (Rapoport, Rapoport, & Bumstead, 1978). Aldous has suggested the term dual-earner because it avoids the above mentioned problems yet clearly addresses the phenomenon of both partners working outside of the home. Thus, the term dual-earner will be used throughout this paper. It will be used to refer to both dual-career as well as dual-worker families.

Today, more than 50 percent of children come from homes where the mother works (Grossman, 1982). In addition about 50 percent of all married women work outside of the home (Hall & Hall, 1979). This rapid growth of dual-earner families is due primarily to the movement of women into the labor force outside of the home. It also appears clear that this phenomenon is hear to stay. Given these facts, it becomes increasingly important to discover the effects of dual-earner families on the individuals involved. For example, how does both partners working affect their relationship and what is the effect on their children? These as well as other questions have yet to be clearly answered. However, for our purpose, we are primarily concerned with what effect dual-earner families have on children and how we, as professionals working with children, can help decrease problems and enhance benefits. The research pertaining to the effect, on children, of both parents working will be presented below. Most of the research has focused on maternal employment's effect on children; therefore, this body of research will also be reviewed. For a more detailed review of this literature the reader is referred to the review done by Bennett and Reardon (1985).

## Traditional Beliefs About Maternal Employment

Prior to the 1960's the widely held belief was that mothers should not work if they had children school age or

younger (Hoffman, 1963, 1974). This belief stemmed primarily from the psychoanalytic view that children could only be raised by their mothers. This was due in part to concepts such as bonding and object consistency which assert that a child's adjustment would be permanently and adversely affected if the mother was not available during childhood (Boswell, 1981; Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974, 1979; Smith, 1981). Many of these same researchers believed that a working wife would also harm the marital relationship.

### The 1960's View

By the 1960's this negative view of maternal employment had begun to change. However, like a pendulum, the change shifted to one in which most researchers believed that maternal employment had no effect on adjustment (Hoffman, 1974).

### The Present View

By the 1970's researchers were looking at specific variables within maternal employment. The two major reviews of literature done during the 1970's both concluded that even though there were sex, class, age, and daycare quality differences which affected results, maternal employment was not seen as having negative effects on children's adjustment (Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974). Studies being performed in the 1980's are beginning to suggest that the issue is not so much whether the mother is employed as much as it is how the whole

family copes with the additional stressors of both partners working. Most of the research on dual-earner families divides the topic according to the child's age (i.e., preschool versus school age). Each will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

## Preschool Age Children

The current research regarding preschool age children does not support the traditional psychoanalytic view that the child can form healthy attachments to only the mother. This research appears to clearly show that a child can form strong attachments to their parents as well as to substitute caretakers without causing problems in adjustment (Etaugh, 1974, 1980; Hoffman, 1974, 1979; Owen, 1984; Smith, 1981). However, almost all the researchers in this area agree that the adult caretaker needs to be a stable figure and that the care has to be consistent and of high quality in order for healthy attachments to form. In contrast to previous thinking, it appears that this adult caretaker does not need to be the mother or, for that matter, even a female. There is growing evidence that children can attach to fathers (Cordes, 1983). In a recent study on the quality of care provided by working mothers, non-working mothers, and substitute caretakers, Stith (1984), found that there was no difference in the quality of care offered by working or non-working mothers. Both provided

high quality care. However, she did find that the care provided by substitute caretakers did not have the same high quality. In her study, care was defined as touch, positive affect, as well as visual and auditory stimulation.

In addition, there is evidence that children from dual-earner families have broadened, less stereotyped sex role concepts (Hoffman, 1974, 1979; Gold & Andres, 1978; Selkow, 1984). The research also indicates that being from a dual-earner family does not necessarily mean decreases in I.Q., academic achievement, or psycho-social adjustment (Cherry & Eaton, 1977; Cochran, 1983; Gold & Andres, 1978; Schacter, 1981; Smith, 1981). In fact, being from a dual-earner family has been found to increase the child's self-sufficiency and peer orientation (Schacter, 1981).

To summarize the literature regarding preschoolers, it appears that one can not say that being from a dual-earner family will harm the child in any manner. However, as has been pointed out, the key issue is not whether both parents work. The more crucial issues are the type and quality of the substitute care as well as the ways in which the family copes with the stresses arising from their dual-earner lifestyle. Unless the stresses that confront the dual-earner family are coped with effectively there are likely to be negative effects. However, as some studies have noted, there are positive

benefits possible for children in dual-earner families. Some of the coping strategies that can be utilized by family members, counselors, teachers, and other professionals to increase the chances of the children benefiting from both parents working, will be discussed later in this paper.

## School Age Children

The research on school age children is similar to preschool age children. Generally, the literature shows that the mother's working (i.e., being from a dual-earner family) does not have to adversely affect the child (Bennett & Reardon, 1985; Smith, 1981; St. John-Parsons, 1978). There are several issues addressed by the research pertaining to the adjustment of school age children. These are outlined below.

### Time Spent and Sex Role Modeling

The recent evidence indicates that working mothers spend as much direct time with their children as do non-working mothers (Goldberg, 1977; Hunt, 1984; Sweeney, 1982). Therefore, the concern over working mothers not being able to spent enough time with their children seems to be unfounded.

As with preschool age children, children from dual-earner families have broader and less stereotyped sex role concepts (Boswell, 1981; Gold & Andres, 1977; Jones, 1980; MacKinnon, 1982; Smith, 1981). In a study that points to the fact that the key variable is not whether the parents work but how they cope

with this situation, Keppel and Lambert (1972) found that if maternal employment creates conflict or other difficulties for the working mother then the self-esteem of the daughter is not enhanced. This finding is supported by Montemayor (1983). She found that, with adolescents, problems surrounding maternal employment were more likely to arise if there was a) family instability, b) undesirable peer influences, or c) a lack of maternal supervision.

Academic Achievement, I.Q., and Career Aspirations

The most recent evidence indicates that maternal employment, in and of itself, has little to do with academic achievement, or I.Q. (Farel, 1980; Mann, 1983; Rockwell, 1983; Rosenthal, 1981). There is some research to support sex and class differences regarding these variables. Girls appear to perform better than boys and boys in the middle class seem to suffer when their mothers work. On the other hand lower class boys, whose mothers work, score better than boys with non-working mothers (Boswell, 1981; Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974, 1979; Smith, 1981).

As for career aspirations, the studies above show that being from a dual-earner family either has no effect or, that for girls, there is a positive benefit. Girls tend to have higher career goals when her mother works.

## Adequacy of Substitute Care

This is a crucial issue, in that if the substitute care is not adequate then problems are likely to occur. Much of the early research on juvenile delinquency was based on the hypothesis that absent mothers supervised their offspring less, which in turn led to delinquency (Hoffman, 1974). Studies tend to show that lower class working mothers supervise less than nonworking mothers, yet no evidence was found to link this with delinquency (Hoffman, 1974). For the middle class, evidence is inadequate to make hypotheses; yet no firm research has been presented to link supervision and delinquency. However, it is generally accepted that quality supervision is important in psychological adjustment. O'Connell (1983) has studied non-maternal child care has found it to have no adverse effects on children's adjustment or development.

However, the question of adequate substitute care still remains. There has been much criticism of the maternal employment research, in general, for it's lack of quality and specifically, for it's use of university sponsored day care as well as other high quality demonstration day care projects. These types of day care do not represent the norm, thus making generalizations to all day care most likely unfounded.

Psychosocial Adjustment and Perceived Rejection

Most of the most recent research indicates that children from dual-earner families are as well socialized as those from single-earner families (Henggeler, 1981; Reis, 1984)

There is evidence to suggest that boys of working mothers show poorer psychosocial adjustment (Boswell, 1981; Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974, 1979; Smith, 1981). Some of these studies indicated that working mothers who were satisfied with their jobs were better mothers and had more well-adjusted children. Joy and Wise (1983), studying college women, found no difference in anxiety between college students who had working mothers and those whose mothers did not work. Hear again, factors other that whether the mother works become critical in determining whether there will be problems or not. As has been noted in other areas, there is evidence to support that being from a dual-earner family can offer benefits, as seen in Asha's (1983) finding that children from dual-earner families were more creative than were the children of single-earner families. Another benefit was noted by Johnson and Johnson (1980). They found that dual-career families were able to differentiate more easily from their children. By differentiate, Johnson and Johnson refer to the parents as well as the children's ability to separate and be independent in a healthy fashion.

There is no evidence that working mothers deprive their children or that the children feel rejected. The research points to the fact that children of working mothers approve of their mothers working and that the more involved the father, the more accepting are the children (Boswell, 1981; Etaugh, 1974; Hoffman, 1974, 1979; Smith, 1981). Trimberger (1982), exploring maternal employment from the child's perspective, found that the older children and girls perceive maternal employment more negatively than do younger children and boys. She also found that other factors such as after school supervision and mother's attitude toward her job, significantly mediated this relationship. Colangelo (1984), who also studied maternal employment from the child's perspective, found that maternal employment does not affect children's perceptions or behaviors. Colangelo also reported that the mother's job satisfaction was not related to the children's perceptions or behaviors. This finding is in conflict with Trimberger's results as well as other studies indicating that maternal job satisfaction does affect children's perceptions and behavior (Crouter, 1982; Howell, 1973; Stuckey, 1982). Again, it is seen that other variables play a crucial role in whether or not maternal employment is harmful.

## Effects on the Couple and the Role of the Father

The rapid increase in dual-earner families is generally

believed to be a signal of greater equality in relationships. There does appear to be a slight shift toward more equality but today's dual-earner families are much more traditional than one might expect (Fox, 1983; Holmstrom, 1972; Levitan, 1981). For example, studies point to the fact that the majority of both child and home care is still the responsibility of the woman (Abdel-Ghany, 1983; Bryson & Bryson, 1978; Maret, 1984; Sanik, 1982). This inequality is seen in Englander-Golden's (1983) finding that working mothers take significantly more time off from work to attend to child care needs than do fathers. In a study designed to explore the causes of this inequality in task sharing, Bird (1984) found that maternal employment in and of itself does not result in the father sharing more family tasks. She discovered that the father's sex-role orientation is the determining variable. When the father's orientation is non-stereotyped then maternal employment is more likely to result in the father sharing more in family tasks. There is additional evidence from the Career and Family Center (1981) that child care is the most equally shared of the family tasks. The Career and Family Center also has found that wives were more satisfied with child care arrangements as well as felt more positive about the effects on the children of their dual-earner lifestyle.

Boswell (1981) found, studying marital satisfaction, that dual-career couples who had traditional roles were increasingly unhappy as the number of children increased and as the husband increased his involvement at work. Boswell also discovered that the happiest relationships were when the wife did not have the sole responsibility for house and children, income was high, husband and wife gave primary emphasis to family, yet each functioned well in their career.

However, as noted above, children of dual-earner families have decreased sex role stereotyping. It appears that having both parents work does widen the sex role modeling presented to children. There are other stresses that affect the couple as a result of being in a dual-earner relationship but these are beyond the scope of this paper. For a good reference on the dual-career couple see the book by Hall and Hall (1979).

One of the major mediating factors in dual-earner families is the role of the father (Hoffman, 1961). The father's support of the mother's working and his involvement in the family is critical in predicting whether the dual-earner family experiences major problems or not. As noted above, Cordes (1983) found that highly involved nurturing fathers enhanced children's sex role development, cognitive growth, and self-esteem. Carlson (1984) also found that an involved father resulted in much less sex role stereotyping for both sex

children than when he is not involved. In another study, Barauch (1981) found that father's helping with child care was positively related to the father's non-traditional sex-role ideology. Barauch also found that helping with child care was negatively related to the daughter's sex-role stereotyping as well as to the father's perception of himself as stereotypically masculine. MacKinnon (1982) found that when the father was absent the home was less stimulating. Thus it appears that having a warm, nurturing father present significantly decreases the chance of negative effects and increases the chance for positive benefits.

## Class Differences

The preceding review indicates that there are many differences in the effects of maternal employment which are class related. Another factor which appears to be specific to different socioeconomic levels is the reason for working. As noted above, women in the middle and lower classes work more out of economic need than because of personal preference. Some polls suggest that most women would prefer to work either not at all or part time while their children are in school (Smith, 1981).

Smith cites another poll which found, that as income increased so did the women's view that maternal employment was not harmful. This suggests factors other than the employment

status of the mother as critical in determining it's effects on dual-earner families.

## Conclusions and Critique of the Research

The research pertaining to the effects of dual-earner families on children shows that there is no universally predictable effect. Whether the results are positive or negative appear to depend on whether or not conditions are favorable (Bennett & Reardon, 1985; Crouter, 1983; Dail, 1982; Howell, 1973; Lewis & Cooper, 1983; Smith, 1981; Stuckey, 1982). As has been pointed out above, this is not a simple question of "are there two parents working." The issue is much more complex than previously thought. There are many mediating factors that are crucial in determining whether the dual-earner lifestyle results in harm or benefits. Some of these factors are a) the child's age, sex, and relationship to parents; b) the families socioeconomic status; c) the nature of the mother's work; d) the families coping resources; and e) the role of the father (or mother's partner).

A number of methodological flaws in the dual-earner research has been noted by both Crouter (1982) and Smith (1981). Smith points out several methodological problems some of which are a) a lack of standard operational definitions for common terms, b) an inability to adequately control variables, c) unclear descriptions of procedures, d) questionable validity

and reliability of instruments, and e) the use of university sponsored or demonstration project day care which is likely to be of higher quality than the norm, thereby making broad generalizations impossible.

Smith addresses the issue of the difference between the dual-career couple and the dual worker family. She criticized the literature for promoting the myth that women who work are professionals in exciting careers with romantic lives. In reality this is not true, for the majority (80%) of women are in "pink collar" jobs such as clerical and secretarial work ("The Work Revolution", 1983).

Smith also points out a sex bias inherent in the research which has been termed a motherhood mandate (Russo, 1976). The motherhood mandate is the belief that a woman has to have children and raise them well. She may have education and work as long as she first fills this obligation. Raising her children well means being physically present when they need her. The studies on attachment to mother reflect this bias. Researchers have not studied attachment to father or the effects of paternal employment on children. These are examples of how sex bias has affected the research and undermined objective analysis of the impact of the dual-earner family on children. Another example of this subtle bias is seen in Levitan's (1981) conclusion that maternal employment is not

eroding family life because women are handling both motherhood as well as work.

A position that represents the opposite of that suggested by the motherhood mandate is proposed by Johnson and Johnson (1980). They speak of a new mandate that encourages bright middle class mothers not to bury their heads in domesticity. They believe that some of the anxiety that is currently being felt by working mothers may be due in part to the fact that there are conflicting cultural directives.

Crouter (1982), in addition to discussing the methodological problems seen in the dual-earner research, also points out that the field needs to refocus away from the work status of the parents and move toward an investigation of the strategies employed in coping with being a dual-earner family. It has been this perspective that the reader has seen throughout this paper. As as been pointed out, being a dual-earner family means little in and of itself. What we as professionals, helping children and their parents, need to recognize is that there are some specific stresses as well as additional tasks these families must cope with in order to continue functioning in a healthy fashion. In addition, as has been evident from the preceding review, there are also some very positive benefits that can be realized by healthy dual-earner families. Our job becomes one of understanding the

dual-career lifestyle and being able to offer assistance in helping families take advantage of the benefits of being in a dual-earner family.

## Implications for Professional Practice

Parents, teachers, and counselors may be called upon to assess the impact of the dual-earner family on the child's adjustment. Parents may seek professional support or advice regarding this topic. While each case must be treated individually, this review has sought to provide general evidence or conclusions from research literature that might help professionals respond to such questions.

## Implications from the Literature

Our review indicates that the literature on preschoolers is unclear and does not lead to the conclusion that no harm is done by mothers working when the child is of preschool age. Nor does the literature indicate that the child is harmed if the mother works. Although results are conflicting, it appears clear that the potential harm is not as severe as originally believed and that few if any negative effects exist if several factors are present in the daycare and family environment.

It seems clear that choosing day care which is stable, stimulating, and warm is important. Full time work would appear to be best avoided if possible. Involvement of the father is increasingly being viewed as important in child development,

especially in dual-earner situations. The recent literature is pointing to the very positive effects an involved, nurturing, and supportive father can have on the children. All these factors would likely decrease the chance of adverse affects of a mother's working during a child's preschool years.

For school age children the literature is less contradictory and it shows that girls do better in most areas of adjustment if the mother works. The working mother apparently serves as a positive role model and as a result girls perform better academically, show less stereotyped sex roles, and have increased career aspirations among other things. Thus, counselors can be comfortable in telling parents and teachers that school age girls are not likely to suffer any negative consequences if their mothers work outside the home. If the father is supportive and if the after school care is of adequate quality then there exists a greater opportunity for realizing the positive benefits outlined above.

Boys on the other hand fair much worse. Academic achievement is sometimes lowered, especially for middle class youth. In many studies, boys also showed poorer psychosocial adjustment. Moderating factors were the mother's job satisfaction and the amount of paternal support. Although the literature is far from being conclusive, there is enough evidence to warrant the counselor, teacher, or parent's taking preventive measures to

help diminish the possible negative effects of maternal employment on boys. Some specific actions that can be taken to enhance the experience of boys in dual-career families are: (a) encourage the active participation and support of the father, (b) make an effort to have the mother's job be as satisfying as possible, and (c) be aware of the potential problems and offer special attention to the boys in dual-earner families.

To summarize the findings as best we can, it appears that if both parents are going to work when the children are young (i.e., the first five or six years) then part time work is advisable if possible. If the parents have to work full time, then finding a very stable, warm, and nurturing caretaker is essential. Once the children are in school the stability and quality of substitute care remains critical. The after school supervision needs to be structured and should offer positive attention, fair limits, and a warm nurturing atmosphere to the child. The work of both parents needs to be validated in the home and both parents should communicate to the children that the other's job is important. This is important in helping the children broaden their sex role orientations as well as in assisting their positive adjustment in general. It appears that it might also be helpful if both parents feel good about their work. It is also beneficial if the family's attitude about both parents working is positive. If being in a dual-earner family

is the reality, then it helps to accept this and begin to look for the benefits. The last factor that will be addressed in this brief summary is the involvement of both parents in all family tasks. The research clearly indicates that having both parents actively involved with both home and child care increases the possibility for positive outcomes. We are suggesting is that the family approach their dual-earner life from a positive attitude and that the entire family work together in making this lifestyle work in their favor.

## Areas of Intervention

There are at least four different ways in which counselors and other helping professionals might intervene to help dual-earner families. These are a) diagnostic, b) guidance and counseling, c) consultation and program development, and d) referral. Each of these is briefly discussed in the following sections.

### Diagnostic

When counseling with children and other family members, counselors must be alert to problems stemming from dual-earner issues. Children of all ages may exhibit behavior problems or adjustment difficulties because of unresolved issues growing out of both parents working outside the home. The four types of dual-career couples identified bu Hall and Hall (1980) can serve as a useful model for identifying problem situations.

Their Type II, adversaries, is described as one where both partners are typically very involved with their careers and not with home, family, or partner support. This is a highly stressful situation to which counselors should be alert.

Younger children of dual-earner couples may be "latch key children", which Robinson (1983), Long and Long (1983) and others have described. Counselors should explore the fears which many of these children and adolescents have regarding fire, robbery, assault, and other violence. These children may also be having serious problems, including physical abuse, with peers and older siblings in after school situations. Older children and adolescents, especially boys, who are unsupervised by adults after school are susceptible to negative peer influences, substance abuse, poor time management, and lowered academic performance (Montemayor and Clayton, 1983; Harper, 1983). Counselors working with children and youth in dual-earner families must be increasingly alert to problems such as these. There is evidence that children may not discuss these problems with their parents because they are seen as powerless to change the situations.

Guidance and Counseling

Besides identifying and diagnosing problem situations, counselors and other professionals can initiate many positive, preventive steps to help family members of dual-earner

families. These may take the form of group based guidance with children or families, or individual counseling. Several activities that are illustrative of this guidance and counseling function are discussed below.

Group counseling. Group counseling may be offered for parents or parents and children to increase communication about dual-earner family member roles, expectations, needs, conflicts and so forth. Research suggests that children who know why both parents are working and how parents feel about their new work/family roles adjust better to dual-earner situations. Likewise, parents need to hear clear messages from children and youth about how the dual-earner lifestyle is impacting them in order to deal proactively with problems.

Group guidance. Group guidance activities can focus on helping adults and children explore new family roles and lifestyles that are not gender based. This may focus on more androgynous sex role behavior.

Support groups. Support groups for parents and older siblings with childcare responsibilities may be useful. Such groups can provide support and resource networks for common problems faced by dual-earner families.

Career and life development groups. Career and life development groups can help late adolescents engage in more realistic planning in preparation for dual-earner and family

roles (Hester & Dickerson, 1982). Many observers agree that planning and negotiating skills are essential to success of adults and children in dual-earner families. The Campus Resource presently under development by Catalyst (Naimark & Pierce, in press) and Going Places (Amatea & Cross, 1980) are notable examples of such programs.

Counseling interventions. Counseling interventions may be especially critical for adolescent boys who appear most likely to be negatively impacted by maternal employment. Female counselors may have an especially critical role to play in working with this group.

Stress reduction interventions. Since the dual-earner lifestyle has the potential for generating many more stressors with which the family has to cope, it is important that helping professionals be aware of the potential stresses and be familiar with various stress reduction strategies. One major method for reducing stress is to reappraise the event that is perceived to cause the stress. Lewis and Cooper (1983) state that the traditional view of dual-earner families is that they have have additional conflicts and stresses. They suggest a reappraisal of this position. If the dual-earner family is viewed in a positive light then it stands to reason that the chance for positive outcomes will increase. For example, maternal employment can be viewed by the woman as mitigating

the traditional stress of full-time homemaking and, by the man, as decreasing the burden of being family provider. There are other ways of appraising stressors as to decrease their negative impact on the family. In addition to cognitive methods of stress reduction, there are many means that families can use to better monitor their stress level and then either adapt to or change the situation that is causing distress.

Consultation and program development

The tremendous breadth and scope of the dual-earner phenomenon has created large gaps in public policy and knowledge (Zigler & Muenchow, 1983). There is much that we do not know and much we need to prepare for. Counselors and other professionals have much to offer in this regard.

For example, school counselors can collect information on the members of dual-earner families at their school, the numbers of latch-key children, stresses and problems of latch key children and so forth. These needs assessments can provide useful information for new policies and programs designed to help dual-earner families.

In addition, new after-school programs may be needed and office hours may need to be adjusted so working parents can more easily meet with professional staff. The latter seems to be one of the most critical problems for dual-earner parents.

Finally, counselors may be able to help set up parent networks for childcare information, legal rights issues involving child abuse, job relocation, as well as other problems.

Referral

Counselors and other professional must view the dual-earner phenomenon in a broad systems view. Many community agencies, including employers, courts, child care centers, neighborhood associations, mental health centers, recreational programs, private counseling services, and others have a positive role to play in this area. School counselors need to be connected with these outside agencies in order to draw upon their resources and make appropriate referrals.

## Conclusion

There is much to be learned about dual-earner families and their impact on children and youth. This paper has reviewed what we do know about this phenomenon and offered suggestions for improved professional practice. Counselors and other helpers must dedicate themselves to continued study of this social transformation of the family and to helping family members cope with the resultant stress and opportunities for growth and change.

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